

Join the national conversation!



Word Generation - Unit 2.10

Focus Words

recite | allegiance | signify | principle | conclusion



Weekly Passage

Students across the country recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily: *I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

In 2002, a father in California sued the government. He said that he did not believe in God. His daughter should not have to say “under God” in school every day. Many people agree with him. They point out that the “separation of church and state,” is a law. This means the government cannot teach or support religion. They say this language in the Pledge is not fair. It signifies to students who do not believe in God that their belief is wrong.

Other people think that taking “under God” out of the Pledge would destroy tradition. About three-quarters of the United States population is Christian. Others follow

religions like Islam and Judaism that are also based on belief in one God.

Supporters of the Pledge say the phrase does not teach a specific religion. They say it just reflects the principles of most Americans. A belief in God is part of the U.S. tradition. People swear on the Bible when they go to court. “In God We Trust” appears on our money.

The Supreme Court reached the conclusion that teachers and students who disagree with the Pledge have the right not to say it, but they did not say the Pledge should be altered.

Do you think allowing people to remain silent is an acceptable solution? Should reciting the Pledge be a requirement in schools? Or should the phrase “under God” be taken out of the Pledge of Allegiance?

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Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”?

Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
recite	(v.) - to speak from memory			
allegiance	(n.) - loyalty			
signify	(v.) - to mean or stand for			
principle	(n.) - a most important belief			
conclusion	(n.) - a judgment or decision			

Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”?

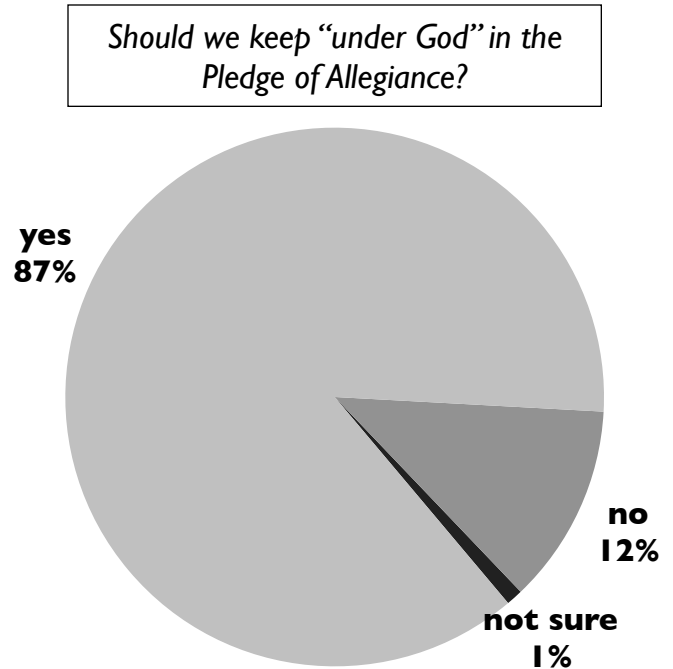
Problem of the Week



Reciting the Pledge of **Allegiance** is meant to bring Americans together. The **conclusion** of the Pledge, “... with liberty and justice for all,” refers to two important American **principles**: the right to personal freedom and the right to be treated fairly.

“Under God” was added in 1954, during America’s Cold War with the Soviet Union. This addition was meant to **signify** that, unlike the Soviet Union, America was a religious nation. To many people, this addition makes sense. Historically, America has been a religious nation. Most Americans are religious believers. But what about atheists? Does the “liberty” promised at the end of the Pledge mean that all Americans, even atheists, should be free to say the Pledge without saying something they don’t believe?

This circle graph shows the results of an AP-Ipsos Public Affairs poll taken in March of 2004.



Option 1: Which of the following statements is true?

- A) Most Americans want “under God” removed from the Pledge.
- B) Most Americans have no opinion.
- C) There are 7 Americans who want to keep “under God” for every one American who wants it removed.
- D) There are 9 Americans who want to keep “under God” for every one American who wants it removed.

Option 2: Three Americans have been selected at random. What is the probability that all three are in favor of keeping “under God” in the Pledge?

Discussion Question: The separation of church and state is an important American **principle**. Asking students to **recite** a daily Pledge of **Allegiance** that includes God is wrong, some say. They say it **signifies** an attack on religious freedom. Is this the right **conclusion**? Or is the Pledge more about history and tradition than about religious belief? Eighty-seven percent of Americans want to keep “under God” in the Pledge. Do you think these Americans are motivated mostly by feelings about religion, or mostly by feelings about history and tradition? Why?

Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”?

Debating the Issue



I. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A The phrase “under God” should stay in the Pledge of Allegiance. It reflects the principles of the majority of Americans.

B The phrase “under God” should not stay in the Pledge of Allegiance. It is not fair to students who do not believe in a single God.

C The phrase “under God” should stay in the Pledge of Allegiance, but students who object to the phrase should not have to say it.

D Individual schools or classes should have the right to decide if they want to include the phrase “under God” in the Pledge or not.

E _____

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

In my experience . . .

that's similar to what I think too...

What makes you think that?

When I re-read the text, it reminded me...

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

Unit 2.10

Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”?

Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

The students in Professor Kahn's class are sitting down after reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

“Why do we say the Pledge?” wonders Jackie.

“Good question!” says Professor Kahn. “We **recite** the Pledge to **signify** membership in a group – to show that we are Americans. We acknowledge the **principles** that are important to us, like justice for all.”

“I disagree,” says Jackie. “I think most people don't think about the words. They say the Pledge because everybody else is saying it!”

“Principles or peer pressure?” says Professor Kahn. “Let's find out!”

Question:

Will a student's decision to say the Pledge be affected by how many other students are saying the Pledge?

Hypothesis:

If a new student sees most people reciting the Pledge, most of the time, he or she will recite it, too.

Materials:

- ▶ 20 students who are new to a school (new students)
- ▶ 20 classrooms of “old students” who will cooperate with the experiment

Procedure:

- 1. Tell the 20 new students that in this school, students may choose to recite or not recite the Pledge.
- 2. In each of 10 classrooms, before the new student arrives, instruct 75% of the old students to recite the Pledge, and 25% not to recite it. We'll call these the "Pledge Classrooms."
- 3. In each of the other 10 classrooms, before the New Student arrives, instruct 25% of the Old Students to recite the Pledge, and 75% not to recite it. We'll these the "Non-Pledge Classrooms."
- 4. In each classroom, observe whether or not the new student recites the pledge.

Data:

	Number of new students who said the Pledge (out of 10)
Pledge Classrooms	9
Non-Pledge Classrooms	2

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your **conclusion**?

How would you make this a better experiment?



Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

recite | allegiance | signify | principle | conclusion

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

Check off what you accomplished:

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.